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regulation perhaps even to a greater extent than many of the railway officers who have accepted it, he nevertheless sees in the present status of that regulation much that is to be deplored, as is manifested by this quotation from his concluding chapter : "Federal authority has been extended from regulation of railroad rates on interstate traffic to the administration in detail of railroad operation and finance. The Federal Government now controls, in fact, the management of our national railroad system. It is a control that is irresponsible to the railroad stockholders. It is responsible only to that expression of public opinion which is agitated by transient waves of sentiment or prejudice, an agitation that is often manipulated by selfish interests, This is the policy of any government management that is not responsible for financial results. It ignores economic principles and shapes its measures with an eye to the perpetuation of its political prestige."

*Municipal Origins. An Account of English Private Bill Legislation Relating to Local Government, 1740-1835; with a Chapter on Private Bill Procedure.* By FREDERICK H. SPENCER. (London: Constable and Company, 1911. Pp. xi, 333).

About the only fault that can be found with Mr. Spencer's book is its title—the title that is in sight when the book is on the library shelves. To most students municipal origins suggest charters or municipal conditions of an earlier period than the granting of royal charters to cities and boroughs. But as the subtitle at once makes clear, Mr. Spencer is not concerned with the mediaeval municipalities. His study is of the formative period of modern English municipal government—the period when the old poor law of Elizabeth's reign was breaking down, and when the municipal corporations in all the larger towns were proving themselves too inept to meet the industrial and social changes to which the urbanizing of England was largely due.

An enormous amount of patient and scholarly work has gone to the preparation of Mr. Spencer's monograph, and with the most complete success; for it is a book that will appeal not only to students of English municipal development, but also to students of Parliamentary procedure, and of the political and social history of England between the American Revolution and the beginning of the reign of Queen Victoria. Its greatest value is to students of municipal history, because in no other volume is there to be found such an adequate, authoritative and interesting account of the intermediate stage in municipal development—

the stage that came between the breakdown of the old manorial system of town government in some places and the failure in other places of the old municipal corporations and the act of 1835, with which the present era in English municipal government began.

Had the old municipal corporations been efficient and trustworthy they would have required statutory powers to meet the new conditions of the last half of the nineteenth century. As it was, members of many of them were more concerned in manipulating Parliamentary elections than they were with the changing municipal conditions; and as these conditions had to be met new local authorities had to be created to deal with them. There was in this period no state department charged with the oversight of the poor law and municipal government—no state department corresponding to the local government board of today; and Parliament interested itself in poor law and municipal concerns only when a local movement resulted in the introduction of a bill creating a new local authority for poor law or municipal work. Several hundred of these new authorities were created between 1740 and 1835—many of them for parishes within what is now the area of the London county council.

Private bill legislation of this character as distinct from private bill legislations affecting only persons, began to assume noticeable proportions in the reign of Queen Anne. It increased enormously between then and the beginning of the reign of George III, and by the end of that reign it far exceeded in volume the general legislation of Parliament. Mr. Spencer traces the beginning of this legislation; how the bills were carried through Parliament; and how the standing orders were gradually trained to deal with this great mass of new business. He also analyses the constitutions of the new local authorities with a view to showing what class of men were permitted to exercise the franchise, what class was qualified to serve on the authorities, and to what extent these authorities consisted of ex-officio members.

In the earlier part of the period from 1740 to 1835 the word democracy as it is used in England today was scarcely understood; and the non-property owning classes—artisans and day laborers—showed little interest in municipal government, a fact that is easy to understand when it is recalled that England at this time had no common schools, and that in many of the boroughs the municipal councils were self-perpetuating and did not regard themselves as responsible to the townsmen at large. There was consequently little of the democratic

element in most of the new local authorities; and even after the democratic movement in national politics began, about the time of the American revolution, and also after the movement for burgh reform in Scotland had made itself heard in the House of Commons, there was little progress towards democracy in municipal government. It was generally regarded by Parliament, as the concern of the property-owning class, with some concessions to non-property owners who lived in houses of a comparatively high rental or rateable value. This was a marked characteristic of the local authorities of the intermediate period—of the years from 1740 to 1835. It was, moreover, a characteristic that did not disappear with the reform of the municipal corporations in 1835; for several examples of this lagging behind of democracy in local governments as compared with national government, can be cited which survived until as recently as 1900.

Mr. Spencer has bestowed exceptionally good work on the development of Parliamentary procedure that had to come with the enormous increase in private bill legislation. It is here that Parliamentary history is indebted to him for admirably supplementing both Clifford's *History of Private Bill Legislation* and Redlich's much later work on *Procedure in the House of Commons*. Students of the social history of England from the reign of George II to that of Queen Victoria will also find Mr. Spencer's work of value, and especially helpful to a realization of some of the changes that came over English life in the last half of the eighteenth century due to the urbanization of England.

E. P.

*La Fortune publique de la France.* By EDMOND THÉRY. (Paris: Librairie Ch. Delagrove. 1911. Pp. 256).

This little book represents an attempt to prepare an inventory of the public fortune of France, which the author defines as "the sum of the private fortunes of the inhabitants of France." His method consists, for the most part, in the presentation of comparative tables for the years 1892 to 1908 of all the various resources of the country such as lands, buildings, crops productions, output of mines, manufactures, farm animals, railroads, canals, the merchant marine, banks, etc. The years 1892 to 1908 were chosen for comparison for the reason that the former coincides with the establishment of the new tariff regime, while the latter was the year in which the government made an elaborate inquiry into the value of landed property and agricultural con-